The God of Israel was, moreover, a God of Righteousness. This overwhelming passion for righteousness is insisted upon in the Bible hardly less than the monotheistic idea: for the one is the concrete expression of the other. Here was no impersonal deity, indifferent to men's affairs, nor yet a selfish one, swayed by flattery and bribes; but a God Who loved goodness, Who abhorred oppression, Who laid down positive standards of conduct between man and his fellow, Who insisted on justice, truth and morality. The ideals of Social Justice, which Western reformers are endeavouring to carry into practice in our own day, are the ideals taught by Isaiah, Amos, and Micah, now become part of the common heritage of mankind. It would be absurd to claim that the affirmation of righteousness as a fundamental principle in the conduct of human affairs is peculiar to the Hebrew: it is to be found in the teachings of Buddha, of Confucius, of the Greek philosophers. These, however, made their protest against superstition and plea for righteousness, almost simultaneously, some two hundred years later than Amos and Hosea had sounded the caU in Palestine, in the eighth century B.C.—and this, according to the traditional view, was nearly a thousand years after those same ideas had been proclaimed at Sinai. Moreover, the non-Hebrew thinkers in effect made ethics a substitute for religion. It is the enduring glory of the Hebrews

that they made ethics central in religion—the ideal to which the western world pays at least lip-service. Nor is there any comparison between the academic reasoning of Plato and the burning hunger for righteousness which is characteristic of the Prophets.

In all this, the Old Testament is even now no less potent a force in the modern world than the New. But it is impossible to neglect in this connexion the essential Hebraic content of the Gospels. Jesus was a